

# Best Practices for Finish Line Grants

## 2019 NCWorks Partnership Conference

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**Helping Students Cross the Finish Line**



**NC JOB READY**

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**NC**  
works

# 2,300+ Finish Line Grants Awarded to date!



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works

# Region Q WDB Finish Line Grants



**REGION Q**  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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**NC**  
works

# Region Q Process



- All community colleges use the same process throughout the region
  - One page application +
  - One page checklist requiring CC staff signature +
  - One page of required documents needed
- 
- A MOU is in place with our neighboring board regions to serve students based on where they attend school, not their county of residence
- After tracking data from the first semester, we found that roughly 30% of students who applied at the college were never making it to the NCWorks Career Center
  - Operations funds were requested, which allows a FLG Career Advisor to work on each campus at least once each week

# Pitt CC, NC Works & Ross Prov FLG Process

## Paper Application

- Students apply via meeting with college representative: an FLG-specific application was created
- Managed by Pitt Community College

## Screening & Intake Scheduling

- College representative collects paperwork, check eligibility and reviews process. Check list provided to student of steps and documents needed. College rep sends docs to Ross Prov representative
- Managed by Pitt Community College

## Intake

- Ross Prov or NC Works Case Manager depending on day of the week walks student through sign up and completes application documentation with student
- Managed by Ross Prov and NC Works

# Southwestern WDB Finish Line Grants Program

*Lisa Ledford, Program and Accountability Manager  
October 25, 2019*

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# SOUTHWESTERN LOCAL AREA

**SUBJECT:** Finish Line Grant Supportive Services Policy

**PURPOSE:** To Establish Policy for Finish Line Grant Supportive Services

**BACKGROUND:**

Finish Line Grant expenditures fall under the heading of supportive services in WIOA Title I. see WIOA sec. 3(59) and secs. 134(d)(2) and (3). Supportive services are services that are necessary to enable individuals to participate in WIOA authorized activities.

A key principle in WIOA is to provide Local Workforce Development Boards (“WDBs”) with the authority to make policy and administrative decisions and the flexibility to tailor the public workforce system to the needs of the local community. To ensure maximum flexibility, the regulations provide Local WDBs the discretion to provide the supportive services they deem appropriate subject to the limited conditions prescribed by WIOA. Decisions about the provision of Finish Line Grant funds, including the duration, timing, and type, are made by the Local WDB.

These expenditures must be reasonable, allowable, necessary, and address a financial need that will enable the student to continue training. Care must be given to be sure that the expenditure solves a short-term problem and not simply applies a “down payment” on a chronic financial problem. All efforts should be made to disburse the grant funds to the provider of a service, instead of to the student. Examples would include paying a mechanic directly for auto repairs, or an eyeglasses provider for a new pair of glasses for a student

**ACTION:**

- The Local Area has defined those acceptable areas for supportive services to be:
- Auto Repair
- Child Care
- Dependent Care
- Housing Assistance
- Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities
- Utility Bills
- Referrals to Health Care
- Assistance with Books and School Supplies
- Assistance with Tuition and Fees
- Internet service



# FLG Supportive Services Policy Continued

Customers require different services at different times during their participation and those services may be vital to their success.

**Auto Repairs:** Auto repair payments that allow a participant to participate in educational and training activities are allowed. This includes repairs of an immediate need. **Normal vehicle maintenance costs are not allowed.** If a participant is repairing a personal vehicle, Finish Line Grant funds may be used to purchase the parts. Auto repair may not exceed the amount of the vehicle. WDBs should take into consideration if public transportation would be a more feasible option for the participant and, if so, Finish Line Grant funds will not be required.

**Child Care:** Child care assistance for children ages 12 and under who reside in the home of the student are allowed if other resources are not available. Expenditures may be limited to a daily maximum per child. Birth certificates may be required to verify the ages of children.

Payments for child care may be required by the provider for a space to be maintained for the child even when the child is not in attendance for sickness or holidays. If this is the policy of the child care center, the provider may be required to provide verification of that for the day(s) in question.

**Dependent Care:** Dependent care assistance may be utilized to help a participant meet their family care needs during participation in their educational activities. Dependent care service providers should be selected by the student. WDBs should ensure that Finish Line Grant funds do not duplicate dependent care assistance available from another source.

**Housing Assistance:** Housing assistance provided to students allows students to maintain or obtain adequate or temporary shelter while participating in educational activities. **Finish line Grant funds may not pay for rental deposits or mortgage payments.** Students needing housing assistance should be referred to community housing assistance programs if applicable. **WDBs must ensure WIOA Title I funds do not duplicate housing assistance from another source.**

**Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities:** Finish Line Grant funds may be utilized to assist a student who needs accommodations to enable them to participate in their educational activities. The WDB should ensure that grant do not duplicate funds provided by another source. A referral to Vocational Rehabilitation may be appropriate and, if so, Finish Line Grant funds would not be required.

**Utility Bills:** Students may obtain assistance in paying for utility bills, including water, gas and electric bills. Care should be taken to ensure that the grant funds do not duplicate assistance from another source.

# FLG Supportive Services Policy Continued

**Utility Bills:** Students may obtain assistance in paying for utility bills, including water, gas and electric bills. Care should be taken to ensure that the grant funds do not duplicate assistance from another source.

**Referrals to Health Care:** Students in need of medical or counseling services should be referred to other community medical resources if applicable. The WDB should ensure Finish Line Grant funds do not duplicate medical assistance available from another source. The referrals include DOT physicals, drug screens, required immunizations, dental, ophthalmologist, drug and alcohol counseling, mental health counseling, behavioral counseling, etc.

**Assistance with Books and School Supplies:** Grant funds may be utilized to assist a student attending approved education classes with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items related to their education.

**Assistance with Tuition and Fees:** In the context that the student has an emergency financial challenge that has negatively impacted the student's ability to pay for tuition and fees, then Finish Line Grant funds may be used to pay tuition and fees, however, it is not the intent of the grant program to function solely as a scholarship for a student's tuition and fees.

## Internet Service Only

### Examples of Unallowed Expenditures for Finish Line Grants

Finish Line Grant funds are not to be used for student expenses that are not allowed as supportive services including:

- Titled or deeded items or when recovery of the expense is anticipated (e.g. rent or housing deposits, mortgage payments, property taxes, fines and late fees).
- Purchase of vehicles
- Business startup costs.
- Phone service (including a prepaid plan, minutes etc.)



## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Finish Line Grant Program**

To be considered for the grant, students must submit a completed Finish Line Grant application including type of emergency assistance needed. Students must also show they have explored other financial options and that a gap still exists with their financial needs. Emergency situations may include but are not limited to childcare, dependent care, utilities, medical bills, and housing.

**First Step: Register at [www.ncworks.gov](http://www.ncworks.gov) prior to requesting an appointment with your case manger.**

**Must have all of the below documents for eligibility:**

- ☐ **Social Security Card**
- ☐ **SNAP approval letter (if applicable)**
- ☐ **Citizenship (Birth Certificate)**
- ☐ **Proof of Residency**
- ☐ **Selective Service Registration**
- ☐ **Veterans Status DD-214 (if applicable)**
- ☐ **PELL Grant Award Letter**
- ☐ **Financial Aid Approved FLG Grant Documentation**



**When all documentation is gathered, contact the WIOA Case Manager at the NCWorks Career Center in your county of residency.**

# 2019-20 Finish Line Grant Certification Form

Semester \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

(must be 18)

Student has described the following type of need: \_\_\_\_\_

I have provided the student with the following documents, if applicable:

\_\_\_\_\_ FERPA Release Form (keep original and forward to Registrar)

\_\_\_\_\_ Financial Aid Award Letter

\_\_\_\_\_ College Transcript

\_\_\_\_\_ Current Course Schedule

\_\_\_\_\_ List of required documentation to take to NCWorks office to complete FLG Application

\_\_\_\_\_ Address and contact information for NCWorks Career Center (go to student's resident county)

# Certification Continued

## CERTIFICATION

Is the student enrolled in a WIOA approved program of study? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of academic program \_\_\_\_\_

Is the student on track to graduate by July 2020? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the student's cumulative GPA in his/her academic program? (Must exceed 2.0) \_\_\_\_\_

Does the student have at least \$1000 of unmet need? \_\_\_\_\_

How many semesters has the student previously received FLG funding? \_\_\_\_\_  
(3 semester maximum limit)

\_\_\_\_\_  
SCC Employee Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Participant Tracking

Last Name	First Name	SCC ID #	Student's County of Residence	Certified by School	Eligible Program of Study	Good Academic Standing; >2.00 GPA	# Semester Previously Received FLG	Type of FLG Assistance Requested	FLG Amount Requested	FLG Amount Approved	FLG Added to FA Awards	Graduation status	Notes
<b>FALL 2019</b>													

# Challenges

- To develop/Implement a referral process to make it easy for applicants and staff
- Accommodate/Provide Service to applicants outside of Region A
- Intense increase in caseload
- Low number of staff dedicated to serve the number of FLG referrals
- Coordinate Internal/External Communication



# Successes

- Expansion of non-traditional support services (eyewear, dental needs, vehicle repairs, childcare, etc.)
- Benefits to local economy by assisting students with necessary emergency needs
- Expansion of approved training list
- Implementation of a common service process accommodating the needs for all community colleges in the region
- Hiring of a dedicated regional FLG Case Manager
- Strengthening of partnerships between case managers and local community colleges

# Lessons Learned

- Overcoming the intense increase in caseloads and the 72-hour turn-around payment process
- The increased workload for Finance Departments and having credit cards available for case manager use
- Design and implement a process to serve the needs of the three community colleges in our region (college referral form, participant tracking spreadsheet, FLG supportive services policy)
- Expanding the approved training list without knowing how it will impact WIOA performance

# Regional Partnership WDB Finish Line Grants

*Tammy Wall, RPWDB Director*

*Kathy Tarlton, Accountability Systems Manager*

*October 25, 2019*

# Regional Partnership CHALLENGES

- Vendor payments
- Timely WIOA enrollments
- Sizeable increase in caseloads



# Overcoming obstacles

- ❖ Community Colleges use P-Card to pay all FLG expenses, then bill the workforce board
- ❖ Streamline WIOA enrollment process
- ❖ DWS Career Advisor is designated FLG Intake Specialist



# Regional Partnership Our Successes

## What made it work?

- Existing relationships between community colleges and workforce boards made the process easier
- Respecting and understanding the requirements and limitations of all stakeholders
- DWS Career Center Manager at the table



# 1<sup>st</sup> Year FLG SUCCESS!

Number of Grants Awarded = 210

Total FLG funds spent in 1<sup>st</sup> year = \$112,350.81

FAILURE  
IS NOT  
AN OPTION

# Regional Partnership: Lessons Learned

- Apply for FLG Operational Funds
- Automation of application process
- Re-evaluate as needed

**COMING TOGETHER IS A  
BEGINNING. KEEPING  
TOGETHER IS PROGRESS.  
WORKING TOGETHER  
IS SUCCESS.**

**HENRY FORD**



# Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4H4fYPjllZE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADdXpE6c-so>

# Questions?

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[ncjobready.nc.gov/skills-and-education-attainment/finish-line-grants](https://ncjobready.nc.gov/skills-and-education-attainment/finish-line-grants)